

VIEW OF CREWE HALL, CHESHIRE.



VIEW OF CREWE HALL, CHESHIRE.

CREWE HALL was erected by Sir Randolph Crewe, an eminent lawyer, in the reigns of Elizabeth and James the First. He was appointed Lord Chief Justice of the Court of King's Bench by the latter sovereign, and is celebrated for his uprightness—having been dismissed his office after only two years' possession, for not concurring in the proceedings of King Charles the First in levying money without the authority of Parliament.

The house was commenced in 1615, and was finished in 1636; the name of the architect is unknown. The plan of the building is a perfect square, each side being 97 feet in length; three sides are broken by the projection of the porch and bow windows. The materials used in its construction are red brick, with greyish vitrified bricks disposed in diamonds throughout; the porch, the entablature, windows, quoins, and balustrades are of stone.

Crewe Hall is undoubtedly one of the finest remaining examples of the English branch of the Italian cinque-cento architecture. The interior presents an extraordinary variety of decorated ceilings, enriched plaster-work, and carved wainscoting. The view shews the south and west sides; in the centre of the latter, on the ground floor, is seen the window of the chapel. It may here be observed, that the chapel attached to the domestic buildings of the reigns of Elizabeth and James the First, were generally in the Gothic style (and this, although the buildings to which they were attached might be Italianized), of the low character of Gothic which then prevailed, but unmingled. The builders of that period, though they thought the "new manner" of building most adapted to domestic architecture, seem to have considered the Gothic an exclusively ecclesiastical.

Crewe Hall was garrisoned by the Parliamentary troops in 1613: the Royalists, under Lord Byron, laid siege to it the same year, on the 27th of December, but were beaten off, with the loss of sixty killed and many wounded. The garrison, wanting victuals and ammunition, yielded it up the next day. It was retaken by the Nantwich troops the year following.

The building has been lately subjected to a very extensive repair and restoration, under the superintendence of Mr. Edward Blore.

Fig. 1. Sketch of the upper entablature and balustrade.

Fig. 2. The lower entablature.

Fig. 3. The plinth mouldings.

Fig. 4. Part of ornamented gable.

C. J. RICHARDSON.

WESTMINSTER BRIDGE.

WORKMEN continue busily engaged in the removal of the upper part of the structure, in those parts where the arches have failed, but whether or not any really competent person is directing the operations, we cannot say. Our impression from a recent examination is certainly in the negative; and we shall not be surprised, if the doctoring be continued much longer, to hear the bridge declared unsafe for traffic even while the new bridge is building.

The interesting pamphlet on the subject, by Sir Howard Douglas, M.P., which has reached a second edition,* shews that since 1838, when the repairs were first commenced, no less than one hundred and thirty-five thousand five hundred pounds have been expended in vain attempts to prevent the damage from extending, or more than a new bridge would have cost.

"There is a point," says the writer, "beyond which the settlement and declension of piers cannot proceed, without ruin to the adjoining arches; and those which, though distorted and unbalanced, still stand upon piers that have sunk considerably, obliquely, and unequally, and which continue, up to this time, to sink, cannot be far from that point. Some of the arches have obviously lost the balanced form; and had it not been for a peculiarity in the construction of this bridge, the masonry above the voussoirs being made to radiate in the direction of the arch stones (which, however, betrays some want of confidence on the part of the architect in the stability of the bridge) those arches must have fallen."

It appears to be generally admitted, that the bridge must come down: the best place for its successor is not so generally agreed upon. Sir Howard Douglas, in the pamphlet alluded to, points out Lambeth-stairs as the proper place for it; but as the honourable baronet's views are somewhat extensive and deserving of consideration, we give them at length, though we cannot agree wholly with them.

* "Metropolitan Bridges and Westminster Improvements." Boone, New Bond-street, 1846.

There must be very strong reasons, indeed, to justify the removal of the bridge far from its present position.

"A new bridge," says Sir Howard, "cannot be constructed on the present site with previously removing the old one; and it would involve an expense of at least 40,000 in erecting a temporary bridge, to avoid stopping altogether the communication between the Borough and Westminster whilst the new work is proceeding. There is no room for a new bridge between the Parliamentary palace and the present bridge, for these are already in contact; and the construction of a bridge any where below the present site, say from Maudesley's premises to Manchester-buildings, would occasion a very great outlay in providing new approaches. But if, leaving Westminster-bridge, in its present state, as a temporary communication, a new bridge were constructed from Lambeth stairs to the nearest part of the opposite bank, no expense for new approaches would be incurred, a direct communication with Westminster would be established, and a magnificent entrance into the capital formed at an interesting and venerable part. The river face of the new Parliamentary palace would be seen to great advantage; and, no longer disfigured and obscured on the other flank, when the distasteful structure which now defaces it shall have been removed. The edifice, standing gracefully and boldly out, would form a beautiful object upon the concave sinuosity of the river, extending thence to Blackfriars-bridge and Somerset-house, which, for this purpose, should be reclaimed from its present unwholesome and disgusting state, by the proposed embankment and terrace, which it were easy to shew is an interference with the state of the river much required at that part,—and thus that pestiferous locality would be transformed altogether into a beautiful and highly embellished portion of the metropolis.

From the Westminster end of this new Lambeth bridge, a street should be opened to lead directly to Shaftesbury-terrace, Eaton and Belgrave squares, or to communicate with some part of that which is now being executed under the provisions of a late act, &c.; and another formed by the river bank, to Victoria Tower and Whitehall, passing between Westminster Abbey and the parliamentary palace.

Entering the court end of the town by this magnificent portal,—St. Margaret's Church removed, in conformity with the unanimous